

Date: April 13, 2020
To: ZEOCs – For Distribution to All Acute Care Facilities
From: Emergency Coordination Centre
RE: N95 Recycling Project; Supply & Fit Testing

For Distribution to All Acute Care Facilities

N95 Recycling Project

Effective Tuesday, April 14, Alberta Health Services (AHS) will begin collecting used N95 model 1870+ respirators from AHS Intensive Care Units in the Calgary and Edmonton Zones, for decontamination, a process of sterilization, and storing. This is a contingency plan that will allow us to preserve these used N95 respirators for potential reuse, if we require additional supply in the months ahead. As the process is refined, it will also be expanded to additional acute care facilities across Alberta.

At this time, the collected N95 1870+ respirators will **not** be circulated back to our sites for immediate use; however, because emerging research has shown that reprocessing does not damage or reduce the effectiveness and safety of these particular N95 respirators, AHS is proactively collecting this supply of used 1870+ models, in the unlikely event that demand exceeds our supply of single-use N95 respirators, in the months ahead.

This initiative proactively positions us to ensure short and long-term protection of our staff, and appropriately conserve the N95 respirator supply in Alberta.

Safety of our staff is paramount to all initiatives that we undertake, particularly during this pandemic.

Appropriate and considered used of our PPE supply continues to be the single most important element to conserving our PPE supply in Alberta. We ask that you continue to use PPE according to guidelines, following your point of care risk assessment. Please help us protect you.

Supply

In addition to the innovative N95 recycling project, we have successfully secured significant numbers of personal protective equipment (PPE) through contracts with global distributors.

The additional orders will continue to ensure frontline healthcare providers have access to the appropriate PPE to respond to the anticipated surge in patients who test positive for COVID-19.

These shipments were secured outside of AHS' usual procurement channels, and are another example of AHS' commitment to the safety of our frontline providers, as they care for Albertans in need.

Fit Testing

WHS is developing a fit test strategy and implementation plan to support the arrival of new models of N95 respirators. As the respirators are a different style than previously use, they will

need to be fit tested to our workers. As part of the plan, WHS will begin fit testing healthcare workers in critical areas to the new respirator models once they arrive.

Last week, Alberta Occupational Health and Safety also extended the expiry of existing fit tests on the current respirator model to **December 31, 2020**. This applies to workers who have completed fit testing in the past two years for which the fit test certificate expires on or after April 1, 2020. Those workers fit tested to a current respirator (16,000 healthcare workers) will not need to renew fit testing until December 31, 2020.

Please be assured that AHS continues to ensure the required supplies are available where and when they are needed the most to continue to deliver quality patient care.

As sites consider strategies to ensure that staff have appropriate access to secured PPE, the Process Improvement Team is available to help you with access and flow planning. Site site leads responsible can contact the Process Improvement team at aiw@ahs.ca for intake.

For detailed information all PPE guidance for COVID-19, visit www.ahs.ca/covidppe.